

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 03180 190504 Z

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ACTION SS-25

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R 190429 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7883

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 3180

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, MARR, KS, KN

SUBJECT: ROKG FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE

REF: SEOUL 3111

SUMMARY: WE HAVE FURTHER INDICATIONS THAT ROKG INTENDS TO PURSUE POLICY CHANGES SUBJECT OF REFTEL. WE EXPECT TO HAVE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH TOP ROK OFFICIALS IN NEXT FEW DAYS IN REVIEW OF REACTIONS TO WHO VOTE AND WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING SOONEST DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS REGARDING FURTHER POLICY INITIATIVES. THERE IS SPECULATION FONMIN MAY RESIGN BUT THIS IS NOT CERTAIN. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIME MINISTER'S SECRETARY HAN SANG-KUK TOLD US IN STRICT CONFIDENCE MAY 18 THAT IN MEETING DAY BEFORE AT BLUE HOUSE PRESIDENT PARK HAD " AGAIN REAFFIRMED" DECISION TO PURSUE POLICY CHANGES WHICH WERE THE SUBJECT OF REFTEL. PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY INSTRUCTED THOSE AT MEETING SEVERAL TIMES THAT POLICY SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED IN CLOSEST CONSULTATION WITH U. S. THAT, OF COURSE, WAS BEFORE WHO VOTE AND ASSUMPTION AT TIME WAS THAT ROKG WOULD WIN. HAN COULD NOT PREDICT WHETHER OR IN WHAT WAY WHO VOTE WOULD AFFECT MAY 17 DECISIONS. SEPARATELY, HOWEVER, BLUE
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 03180 190504 Z

HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISER HAHM PYUNG- CHUN, WITHOUT REFERENCE TO MATTERS DISCUSSED IN REFTEL, TOLD US HE THOUGHT ROKG WOULD HAVE SOMETHING TO DISCUSS WITH US IN ABOUT 10 DAYS WHICH WOULD INDICATE HOW ROKG WILL MOVE IN THE WAKE OF WHO VOTE.

2. IN ANOTHER CONVERSATION MAY 18, DRP ASSEMBLYMAN MUN TAE CHUN TOLD US, ALSO IN EXTREME CONFIDENCE, THAT HE AND 2 OTHER DRP ASSEMBLYMEN WHO WITH MUN ATTENDED IPU CONFERENCE IN ABIDJAN ARE ENGAGED IN SECRET PROJECT FOR PRESIDENT TO STUDY AND RECOMMEND " NEW ROKG DIPLOMACY." STUDY WAS BEGUN 10 DAYS AGO AFTER ASSEMBLYMAN PARK CHUN- KYU WHO LED IPU DELEGATION TOLD PRESIDENT HOW BADLY POLICY CHANGES ARE NEEDED. PARK, MUN AND OTHERS IN IPU DELEGATION WERE DEEPLY IMPRESSED WITH THIS NEED DURING THEIR TRIP. STUDY MUST BE COMPLETED AND PRESENTED TO PRESIDENT WITHIN 10 DAYS. MUN WAS OBVIOUSLY PROBING FOR US REACTIONS TO VARIOUS IDEAS GROUP IS CONSIDERING. HE TOLD US SMALL GROUP IN YUJONG- HOE (REVITALIZATION GROUP) IS ALSO MAKING SUCH SECRET STUDY FOR PRESIDENT BUT PARTICIPANTS HAVE NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED TO HIM. MUN WAS EMPHATIC THAT OTHER ASSEMBLYMEN AND CONCERNED PUBLIC ARE FAR AHEAD OF GOVT IN FEELING NEED FOR POLICY CHANGES AND THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM WITH PUBLIC OPINION.

3. SEVERAL OBSERVERS ARE PREDICTING THAT FONMIN IS SURE TO BE DROPPED NOW AND THAT HE WILL IN ANY EVENT SUBMIT HIS RESIGNATION. THAT WOULD NOT BE EXCEPTIONAL BUT OTHER ARE SAYING THAT CHANGE OF FONMIN IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE WOULD BE PSYCHOLOGICALLY BAD IN CONTINUING COMPETITION WITH THUS THAT PRESIDENT WOULD DEFER ANY CHANGE FOR A WHILE.

4. OVER NEXT FEW DAYS WE WILL HAVE THE CHANCE TO EXPLORE ROKG REACTIONS IN FURTHER DETAIL. WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING DEPARTMENT' S VIEWS CONCERNING FUTURE POLICY INITIATIVES REQUESTED REFTEL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
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